"his Allyes and Abetters, against all equity, and hath exposed them "to the mercy of their Enemies, who solemnly made a peace, and "reaped great benefit thereby; but retaining the profits thereof, "most rashly brake the same again: who most unjustly oppresseth "his Neighbouring Kings, and Princes: who engaged his Publick "Faith, but as publickly infringed the same again; who by no "means desires peace, who is an Incendiary, and Fomenter of all "Wars, and Troubles among Christians: and who therefore de- "serves the wrath and curse of Christendom.

As therefore these forces are raised by us, on a just and legal cause, not intending so much as to move an Arm, or a Foot, to intrench upon the Rights of others; But chiefly, to relieve those who are unjustly oppressed, to restore the disturbed and infringed Peace and Tranquility, unto its former splendor again, and thereby to induce the King of *Sweden*, the sooner to hasten and promote the same. So we do most assuredly and earnestly hope and believe, that by the Almightyes assistance, and the piety, love, faith, and justice of the cause, as also by the assistance of all Christian Kings, Princes, and Common-wealths, but especially by your Majesties (who by a successive and particular due beareth the Title of the most *Christian and Equitable King*) this design will be seconded: remaining also confident that your Majesty will joyn with us herein; that all the Merchants, and Negotiants, throughout the whole world, may not, by the Swedes, attaining to the absolute Dominion of the *Baltick* Seas, be made Tributaryes, and enforced to pay Taxes, & Impositions, unto them to all perpetuity. To the great prejudice, and damage of all other Kingdomes.

Herewith we recommend your Majesty to the Almighty's Protection, wishing you all happiness and prosperity in your undertakings. Given in our Castle at *Collen on the Spree*, on the seventeenth day of *September*, 1658.

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3
A

Practicall Discourse

CONCERNING GODS DECREES.

In Two parts.

The First concerning mans unfitnesse to dispute against the Decrees of God: out of Rom. 9. 20.

The Second tending to Assert and Cleare Gods Absolute Election of a Limited and certaine Number unto Eternall Life: out of Acts 13. 48.

By EDVVARD BAGSHAVVE *St. of Ch. Ch.*

Jan: 12 OXFORD,
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for *Tho. Robinson*, 1658. Jan: 12.

BRITISH MUSEUM

TO THE HONORABLE MY Lord *BRADSHAWE* Lord Chiefe Juſtice of *Cheſter.*

My Noble Lord,

A Late Author in his ſeverall Treatiſes wherein he endeavours to defend (I will not ſay the *Arminian* Tenets, becauſe he is unwilling to have them ſo ſtiled, but, which is all one) *Free-will* and *Conditionall election*, whether becauſe he was touched with compunction for his former errors, as he thinks them; or elſe to make his preſent opinions more taking and plauſible (as if he had not fell into them by chance, but got them after much and ſerious ſtudy) I find that he frequently doth uſher them in, by profeſſing that he was once a *Calviniſt* (for that it Mr *Pierce.*

ſeemes muſt be the Name of Obloquie to thoſe, who, according to Scripture (of which *Calvin* was the beſt Interpreter, that God hath yet vouchſafed his Church) do maintaine *Abſolute Predeſtination*) but *he was frighted into his wits* (for ſo he is pleaſed to play upon himſefe) by *conſidering the Horrible conſequences of Abſolute Reprobation*.

Were I willing to make my ſelfe worke in this time of my retirement here, by engaging with a Perſon, who is, as ſome thinke very able, I am ſure very confident, and very Angry; I would not deſire greater advantage then theſe few words of his might give me: for to be an *Arminian*, I meane an Aſſerter of *Univerſall Redemption*, and of thoſe other Tenets which lead to it or flow from it, a very little paines will ſerve the turne; and every man is ſo Naturally apt to make himſelfe a ſharer with God, and to cozen himſelfe with hopes of mercy, that it is a much harder matter to eſcape thoſe opinions, then to attaine them. Beſides for any to be deferred from the maintenance of any truth in *Theſi*, becauſe it ſeemes attended with unanſwerable difficulties, and many ill conſequences, is to my thinking very unreaſonable: ſince if that may be admitted, all the myſterious part of our Religion which containes the *Credenda* muſt never expect either to be entertained or defended. I might adde farther, that for any *to be frighted into his wits*, is a thing altogether unuſuall: and if it hath indeed in this matter ſo fared with that Gentleman

tleman, he is the first who can boast of the Experiment.

But, my Lord, I am not desirous to dispute at all in these matters, much lesse with one, who is so taken up with abusing persons of greater worth, that he cannot find leasure to take notice of one so Inconsiderable as my selfe: onely entending to handle some part of that question which is now in contest, I must crave leave to professe, that I never yet was satisfied, but that those fatall consequences, whatever they are, which are thought to attend *Absolute Reprobation*, they do as farre as I can see equally Accompany Gods *Prescience*, of which yet this Gentleman is a zealous assertour. For if God foresees who will refuse the meanes of Grace, he foresees likewise that he will assist one and not another: and that without such particular Divine assistance, it is impossible any should believe and be saved. Now what is this else, but for men at long runne, after much time mispent in wrangling, to have recourse unto *Gods Absolute* but yet discriminating *Will* and *Power*, which at their first setting out they were desirous to decline.

As for those Tragicall stories and dreadfull Nothings, wherewith that Gentlemans writings, and before him *Acta Synodalia* are stuffed, concerning God's *cruelty*, *Tyranny* and I know not what else— As also the vaine and impertinent declaiming from the common places of Gods *Justice*, and *mercy*, thereby to enervate or at least to Enveigh against

Gods

Gods *Absolute, Irresistable*, and *Unaccountable Soveraignty*. All this terrible talke is nothing but Noise and Flourish, fit indeed to amuse a country Auditory, or to impose upon a lazy and superficiall reader; but certainly of very little weight with them, who dare not be frighted from, nor talked out of their faith, and who thinke Scripture truths are to be embraced and followed, in spite of all mens corrupt and empty reasonings against them.

Out of the Scriptures therefore I have undertaken briefly to demonstrate these two things,

First, *That whatever opinion is manifestly revealed in Scripture, (such as I* take Absolute Reprobation to be*) to argue against it, and by Artifices of Humane Wit, and Eloquence to seek to overthrow and disgrace it, this is nothing else but to dispute against God, and impiously to be wise above what is written.*

Secondly, *That God hath from all Eternity designed a particular Number unto Eternall life, and that this Election is Absolute.* From whence it followes, that all those who are not by God in that Act of Absolute Election appointed to life, they are reprobated, *i.* Designed for destruction; which Decree is Absolute, made by Soveraigne Will, but Executed in justice.

And this my Lord, is the summe of the Ensuing Treatises; for the publishing of which, next to the care, every Christian should have to see the Truths of God, so farre as they are revealed to him asser-

ted

ted and freed from cavill, eſpecially in a contradicting, and every way too quarrelſome Age; I have no one outward motive more prevailing with me, then my, perhaps too great, Ambition of preſenting ſomething to your Lordſhip, whereby I might teſtify to the World, not onely that reall eſteeme I have of your Lordſhip's ſingular worth and eminence in generall, but likewiſe to manifeſt in particular how mindfull I am of thoſe many ſignall and Unparallelled markes of Favour, which You have been pleaſed to conferre upon my ſelfe; for which, though the ſervice of my whole life will be too poore and meane a ſacrifice, and no endeavour can amount to deſerve the name of requitall, yet I could not but thinke it my duty to ſtudy an acknowledgment: which Zeale of mine, if your Lordſhip pleaſes either to accept or pardon, I have atteined my end; For I aime at nothing more then the Honour of being owned for

My Noble Lord

Your Lordſhip's moſt Obliged, moſt thankfull, and moſt Humble devoted Servant

EDVV. BAGSHAVVE.

Ch.Ch.
Decemb. 20.

BRITISH MUSEUM

Romans 9. 20.

Nay but O man who art thou that replieſt againſt God.

THe Apoſtle in this *Chapter* handling that great queſtion, why the *Jewes*, who were, by the Apoſtles own confeſſion, *heires* and *Children of the Promiſes*, ſhould now be omitted and caſt off; and the *Gentiles*, that before were *Aliens*, ſhould now be admitted and taken into *the Covenant of Grace in Chriſt*; he fixeth it upon *God's Election*: who being a *moſt free Agent* chooſeth one and refuſeth another, *according to His good pleaſure*, and not out of any foreſight of their Workes, whether good or bad; for *Jacob was loved and Eſau hated, even before they had done either good or Evill—verſ.* 11.

This Doctrine ſo much detracting from the merit, and thereby abaſing the pride of man, the Apoſtle foreſaw would not be eaſily digeſted, and therefore he Repeats and Anſwers the moſt obvious of thoſe objections, which were likely upon a rationall account to be made againſt it; and which in ſhort doe containe the ſumme of whatever can be urged in this point.

The firſt Objection is couched *verſ.* 14. *What ſhall we ſay then is there unrighteouſneſſe with God—?*

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid.--You may object: if it be ſo, that the reaſon why one man believes, and another doth not; and conſequently that one man ſhall be ſaved and another damned, be only from *God's Election*, and not from their *merit*, doth not this argue ſome *unrighteouſneſſe in God?* a kind of injuſt προσωποληψια, or *reſpect of Perſons*, thus to preferre one man before another? For as all men are equall by nature, ſo it ſeemes to be moſt juſt and reaſonable, that they ſhould be equall in condition too; & not this vaſt difference, as to their finall eſtate, to be put between thē, without any deſert or merit of the parties.

To the Objection thus framed, the Apoſtle returnes a double Anſwer.

1. In a phraſe of abhorrency-*Is there unrighteouſneſſe with God? God forbid*; let not ſuch a thought enter into our hearts; for whatever the iſſue of Gods dealings may be, yet, as to the cauſe of thē, this foundation ſtandeth ſure, that *God is righteous in all his doings; and will be juſtified when he is judged.*

2. By inſtancing in the example of *Pharaoh*, whom, God ſaith, *he raiſed for this very purpoſe, to manifeſt His Glory*; from whence the Apoſtle concludes--*v.* 18. *That God hath mercy, on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardneth*-- i. that we are not to looke for any outward cauſe of Gods actings; for he is not tied to mans endeavour, ſince all our good is from him, and therefore can merit nothing at his hands: He ordaines happineſſe, and beſtowes holineſſe on whom he pleaſes; they are both free-gifts, we cannot naturally deſerve the one, nor are we willing to deſire the other---God therefore *hardens*-- i. He lets the ſinner be a ſinner ſtill; he doth not remove the ſtone, but lets men perſiſt and goe on in their naturall hardneſſe; for he is not obliged to his creature, but acts all things, both in mercy or otherwiſe, according to the Dictates of his *Abſolute, Soveraigne* and *Unaccountable Will.*

This Anſwer being ſo ſtrict and ſevere, as leaving the greateſt

greateſt part of mankind in an hopeleſſe and irrecoverable conditiõ, it is objected again *v.* 19. *Thou wilt then ſay unto me, why doth he yet find fault, for who hath reſiſted his will?* i. If it be ſo, that *it is not in him that wills, nor in him that runs,* but *only in God that ſhowes mercy:* if by any action of ours, barely as ſuch, we can neither merit Heaven, nor eſcape Hell; if our wills are tyed up ſo cloſe to the will of God, that like leſſer wheeles they move onely as that great mover doth guide them?—then, why is God ſo Angry with ſin and ſinners? Why doth he forbid, dehort, and threaten by his Prophets! To what end ſerve all thoſe examples of vengeance, which we tremble to read of? for if it be ſo with us, we may be miſerable, but we cannot be ſinfull; if our ſpirits be put into an unſuitable frame, ſo as that we walke contrary to God, it is our ſad neceſſity and not our fault; ſince none can *alter*, much leſſe *reſiſt the will of God*, which alone hath made us ſo.

And now the Objection being preſſed to ſuch a degree of impiety, that it doth tacitely lay the guilt of all mens Tranſgreſſions upon God, the Apoſtle thinkes it high time to cut off all farther Arguing, which he doth in theſe words—*Nay, but what art thou, O man, who replieſt againſt God?* As if he had ſaid—Doſt thou know who thou art, thou bold inquiſitive creature, or who it is thou dealeſt with? Conſider that thou art but a man, and wilt thou queſtion thy Maker's Juſtice? Forbeare vaine preſumptuous man, ſtand off, and lay thy hand upon thy mouth, for God is in the Buſh, God is at the bottome of this diſpute, and therefore admire with reverence, what thou canſt not comprehend with reaſon.

So that the words are a ſhort, but yet ſharpe, confutation of all carnall reaſonings in the matters of God: ſuch Debates are evinced not onely to be ſinfull, but likewiſe unreaſonable, by a threefold Argument lying in theſe words.

1. The firſt is taken *from the meanneſſe and contemptibleneſſe of the perſon diſputing*; and that is man: The Apoſtle brings him in with a *Quis Tu! What art Thou!* as if he was of ſo ſlight a make and value, that he fell under no definition. *What art thou O man!*

2. *From the Greatneſſe and Incomprehenſible Excellence of the Perſon diſputed againſt*, and that is *God*—a name able to ſtrike dumbe and confound the moſt exalted reaſon. —*What art thou O man who diſputes againſt God?*

3. *From the Abſurd, Sawcy and Malapert manner of carrying on the Diſpute*; it is not modeſtly making an Objection, or propoſing a doubt and ſo away; but a reſolved perſiſting in the Cavill; a kind of challenging God to vy Arguments with him. The word is—Αντιπκρινεσθαι—*To anſwer againe and againe*; never to give over; to chop Logick with God, to ſeek to nonplus him, and to drive his Almighty Power and Wiſdome to an abſurdity.

So that here is man, vaine man, not diſputing but Cavilling, and that not with his fellow-creature but with God--put all this together—Empty, Ignorant, Wretched Man, conteſting with a Perfect, Wiſe and Allmighty God; and that in ſuch a way too, as if Man were the better, & the wiſer of the too. Strange folly, madneſſe & impudence, this! & yet whoever gives his reaſon the reines, & will reſolve to diſpute when he ſhould obey, muſt needs be guilty of it.

The words thus explained and divided may be ſummed up in this one Propoſition-or Doctrine—viz.

Doct. *Man, in whatever Capacity conſidered, is not a Competent Judge, of the Equity and Juſtice of the proceedings, waies and Counſells of God, in the diſpoſing and Ordering of his Creatures.*

This may be demonſtrated two waies

1. Firſt, *from the quality and nature of the Perſon Judging*, and that is Man.

2. Secondly, *from the Quality and nature of the things*

to be judged. The Wayes and Counſells of God.

In the Firſt I ſhall prove that *man is not fit to Judge*.

In the Second I ſhall prove *that the Counſells of God, neither do nor can fall under mans Judgement.*

For the Firſt, viz. *That Man is not fit to Judge*, it will be cleare, if we conſider that there are Two things, eſpecially requiſite to qualify a man to be a Judge.

1. *Ability* or *Skill.*

2. *Authority* or *Power.* And Man wants both in this Caſe.

1. Firſt, *Man wants Ability or Skill. Vaine man,* ſaith *Job, would be wiſe, though he be borne like the wild aſſe Colt.* -- i e. Man would ſtill reteine his Ambitious Humour of pretending *to know Good and Evill*; he would ſtill exalt himſelfe, and *be like God*; although that very Deſire has made him become, *like the Beaſts which periſh*, Raſh, Heady, and Impertinent. For ſince our Fall, Pride has taken up the Place of Reaſon; and Arrogance fills that Roome, which Knowledge poſſeſſed before. As in a veſſell, when Water, or the more ſolid body goes out, preſently Aire comes in. cap. 11. 12.

To take a Briefe Survey of mans Weakneſſe and Inability, we will conſider him

1 In Himſelfe.

2 As compared to God.

1 Firſt, Conſider Man in himſelfe, and then I may aske the Queſtion, which our Apoſtle doth here, *What art then O Man?* Declare us thy Originall, diſcover thy Excellence; where lies thy Worth? whence comes thy Preheminence? Survey thy Out-ſide, and tell me what ſeeſt thou? a rotten periſhing Carkaſſe! As our Saviour ſaid of the *Tombes*, how glorious ſoever they ſeemed, yet they were but *Tombes*, i.e. Charnell-houſes; Faire without, but Rotten within. So the moſt Beautifull and Specious

out-ſide, Deck it, Diſguiſe, Trimme and Adorne it how you will, yet it is ſtill but Duſt; you may change and vary its ſhape, you cannot change and alter its ſubſtance. *Duſt thou art,* ſaid God to *Adam, and to duſt ſhalt thou returne.* Was not this a ſad ſtory for *Adam* to heare; when he thought of nothing elſe, but of being, as the Divell had promiſed him, *like unto God knowing goood and evill:* God doth preſently undeceive him, by minding him of his Originall, and telling him what would be the Exit of all his Borrowed Glory. This no doubt did levell his Thoughts, and lay low thoſe Proud Imaginations, which otherwiſe might have ceazed him; ſince a Casket of ſo meane a value, can ſcarce be conceived to conteine in it a Jewell of any Excellent Price.

Gen. 11. 19.

I will not, ſaies God, *alwaies ſtrive with man, for that he alſo is fleſh:* which may be interpreted, for that he is of the ſame weak, Fraile, and Infirme Nature with other Creatures. Wherein God ſeemes to make it as an Argument of his Bearing with man, becauſe Man was *Fleſh,* i. e. unable to beare what God was able to lay upon him. But if God drawes an Argument of Compaſſion from Mans Frailty, ought not we from thence likewiſe to draw an Argument of Submiſſion? If God is pleaſed to forbear puniſhing and ſtriving with us, becauſe we are but *Fleſh,* ought not we for the ſame Reaſon much more to forbear judging of, and contending with him? This uſe did *Abraham* make of it. *Behold,* ſaith he, *I have now taken upon me to ſpeake unto the Lord, who am but Duſt and Aſhes: Abraham* lookes upon it as a Boldneſſe, for which he ſeems to aske Pardon, that he undertook ſo much as to ſpeak to God, *ſince he was but Duſt and Aſhes;* how much leſſe do we thinke for the ſame reaſon would he have offered to have diſputed with him? But

Gen. 6. 3.

Gen. 18. 27.

Secondly, look into man a little nearer, and ſearch his Inward and Hidden worth: what is that Principle which men

men ordinarily do ſo much boaſt of and magnify? They call it *Reaſon!* and pray what is *Reaſon?* Is it not that ψυχικὸς ἄνθρωπος that *Carnall or Animall man, which cannot conceive the things of God,* and looks *upon all the Actings of the Holy Spirit as Folly!* Certainly a ſmall wind will fill our Saile, if ſuch a Principle of knowledge as this can puffe us up: little cauſe have we to boaſt of that, which coſt us ſo deare, and is ſo little worth: for as to get Reaſon, we loſt Paradiſe; ſo till we renounce our Reaſons, we can never recover it. 1 Cor. 11. 14.

But take Reaſon at its beſt and higheſt Elevation, *Salomon* ſayes it is *the Candle of the Lord:* and ſhall the Candle ſay to the Sun, thou haſt no Light in thee? Shall our Faint, Glimmering, and Derivative Luſtre, preſerre or oppoſe it ſelfe to the Fountaine, from which it iſſued? *There is a Spirit in man,* ſaith *Job, but the Inſpiration of the Almighty giveth underſtanding:* and do we think he gave it for theſe purpoſes, to argue and diſpute his doings? ſo much to abuſe and miſimploy our Talent, is certainly a greater ſin, and will bring down a greater Puniſhment, then barely not to uſe it. *Prov.* 20. 27. cap. 32. 8.

In ſhort, mans Reaſon at its beſt and utmoſt extent, is a Narrow, Shrunke, and Limited thing; in Spirituall things altogether blind and perverſe: in Naturall things either Ignorant, or onely changing Ignorance into Uncertainty: and ſhall a man ſo much ſtretch this Principle, as by it to condemne his Maker? ſhall we with this ſcantling meaſure Infinity? or ſet our ſelves Judges in the higheſt adminiſtrations of Providence, who cannot demonſtratively prove the Motion of the ſmalleſt Atome? what is this but *to darken Counſell by words without knowledge,* to put a Falſe Comment upon a Cleare Text, and to blurre the beauty of Providence with our Perverſe and ſhortſighted Interpretations. *Job* 38. 2.

Secondly, Mans Inability doth yet farther appeare, if you-

you conſider him as compared to God. It is not for nothing here that the Apoſtle doth put this Queſtion, *Who art thou, O Man, that replyeſt againſt God?* but he does it, thereby to aggravate the Sinfull Preſumption of the Diſputer; it was againſt God, therefore the more heinous. And indeed a man can never know his owne Weakneſſe and Imperfection aright, till he has loſt himſelfe in contemplating the Vaſt Abyſſe and Ocean of Gods Perfection: as if we would exactly know whether a thing be little or not, we do not uſe to ſet it by ſomething that is leſſe, but to compare it unto ſomething Greater, as a Sparke to the Flame, a Drop to the Ocean, and the like. So in this caſe, while a man Centers in himſelfe, and drawes all his Lines inward; he may perhaps pleaſe himſelfe with ſome thoughts of *Selfe-ſufficiency*; but when he once goes out of himſelfe, and takes a ſtrict view of the Amazing Greatneſſe and Majeſty, which God diſcovers even in his works of Providence, then doth a man preſently begin to perceive his own Emptineſſe. For ſuppoſe a man were kept up cloſe impriſoned in a Dungeon all his dayes, and if after ſome time of Durance there in that Horror and Darkeneſſe, he ſhould by chance have a little Glimpſe of light let in to him at a ſmall Cranny, how infinitely would he be delighted and pleaſed with it; but if afterwards he were taken from thence, and by degrees fitted to endure, and then placed in full Sun-ſhine, how ſtrangely would he loath his former place of Reſtraint and Bondage? It is juſt ſo with a man, who by degrees is taken off from himſelfe, and prepared to a gracious Diſcovery of Gods excellence. *When* I *conſider*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *the Heavens, which are the worke of thy hand*--- it followes preſently, *what is man that thou art mindfull of him, or the Son of Man that thou conſidereſt him?* Look upon God in the Glory and Brightneſſe of his Appearance, and then all Conceits of Humane Excel-

Pſ. 18. v. 3, 4.

lence

lence will preſently vaniſh, as Starres do diſappeare at Noon-day.

Certaine it is, that if men were more frequent and ſerious in the contemplating of Gods Power and Wiſedome, they would not be ſo taken up with thoughts of their own; a want of comparing our own emptineſſe to Gods fullneſſe, is the only thing that doth moſt puffe us up and ſwell us. A pregnant Inſtance of this may be ſeen in the Caſe of *Job*; he finding himſelfe under a great Preſſure, and feeling, as he thought, hard meaſure from God, grows Impatient, and ſeems to long for nothing more, then that he might diſpute with God; thinking no doubt but he had ſo much to ſay in his own behalfe, as would poſe even God himſelfe to anſwer. Hence are thoſe Paſſionate Expreſſions, --*Oh that a man might plead with God, as a man pleades for his Neighbour*; and *Oh! that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his Seat! I would order my Cauſe before him, and fill my mouth with Arguments.* i. e. I would Diſpute and Argue the Caſe with him: his Friends diſſwade him from this Attempt all they can, they tell him over and over, that *he forgets himſelfe in turning his Spirit againſt God, and in letting ſuch words goe out of his mouth.* And when that would not take him off, *Elihu* undertakes to anſwer in Gods behalfe, and urgeth againſt him, that *God is greater than Man, and gives no account of his Matters.* That his *Counſells are Inſcrutable*, for *touching the Almighty who can know him, or ſearch him out unto Perfection.* With many other arguments to the ſame purpoſe; yet ſtill *Job* remains unſatisfied, and nothing but diſputing with God himſelfe will content him. Well! at laſt God doth condiſcend to anſwer his Curioſity: and what is the Iſſue? when once God doth mind him of his Power, that all we ſee or feele is only an Effect and Product of his Goodneſſe: when even the moſt common and ordinary *Phænomena* of Nature,

cap. 16. cap. 32. 3, 4. cap. 15. 13. cap. 34. 23. cap. 37. 23.

ture, viz. Haile, Snow, Raine, &c. are evinced to be beyond the reach of mans Reaſon to comprehend, then *Job* preſently alters his Note, he is not now for Diſputing any longer, but ſinkes into an humble Acknowledgment. *Behold I am vile*, ſaith he, *what ſhall I anſwer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth.*— A dejected ſenſe of our own vileneſſe is moſt likely to be the Reſult of comparing our ſelves to Gods Excellence.

Job 38.

cap. 40. 2, 3, 4.

Thus man wants Ability to Judge.

2°. Secondly, as man wants *Ability*, ſo likewiſe he wants *Authority*, which is the Eſpeciall Requiſite to conſtitute a Judge. When one came to our Saviour to ask his Reſolution in a caſe of a Civill concernment; our Saviour, though he had all power in him, yet acting as Man, refuſed to meddle, and askes him, *Who made me a Judge?* So I aske thee, thou Bold Diſputer, whoever thou art, who made thee a Judge? and by what Authority doſt thou argue theſe things? if thou haſt no Warrant, nothing in the Word of God to ſhew to juſtify thy Confidence, thou art not only a Raſh and Ignorant Cenſurer, but an Impudent Intruder. I find in Scripture murmuring reproved, Diſputing forbidden, and nothing but Obedience required. Wilt thou then upon no better a Ground, then becauſe thou art unſatisfied with the Juſtice or Reaſonableneſſe of ſuch and ſuch a Proceeding, take upon thee to ſound the Depths of God, and to call him to thy Tribunall? what? ſhall the *Judge of all the Earth* be now arraigned at thy Barre, and *give thee Account of his Matters?* or elſe thou wilt charge upon him Folly, Injuſtice or Cruelty, with other things, which I Tremble to Thinke of. *Quo jure!* how comes this about, let us know when God parted with his Prerogative, and made you his Overſeer?

Luc. 12. 14.

The Apoſtle *James* commanding thoſe to whom he writes, *not to ſpeak evill one of another*, he gives this Reaſon for it, *becauſe thereby they ſhould judge the Law*, which forbids all Uncharitable Backbitings. *But*, ſaith he, *if thou*

Judge the Law, thou art no longer a Doer of the Law, but a Judge, i. e. Thou art a Thing which God never intended thee, he gives his Law to be a Rule of thy Obedience, and not a Subject of thy Reaſoning. So ſay I here, if any takes upon him to Judge Gods proceedings, i.e. if thou weigheſt his wayes in thy Ballance, if thou meaſureſt him by thy Line, if thou doeſt Limit & circumſcribe him by thy Compaſſe, and ſo proceedeſt to paſſe Sentence upon him; in this caſe thou art no longer a Servant of the Lords, but a Judge: and then thou mayeſt expect and feare what will follow; for if ſo many periſhed at one time barely for looking into the Arke; and if *he that judges another*, though his fellow-creature, is threatned *to be Judged*, how much ſorer Puniſhment, how much ſeverer Judgment ſhall he expect, who thus provokes the Lord by Judging, Cenſuring, and even Condemning him? *Jac.* 4. 11.

So much for the firſt Reaſon: that Man is not fit to Judge.

The ſecond Reaſon is taken from the Nature and Quality of the things Judged, they are the Wayes, Counſells, and proceedings of God, and ſo cannot fall under Mans Judgment. Thus the Apoſtle doth argue *à pari*: *As no man can know the things of man, but the Spirit of man that is in him; ſo none can know the things of God, but the Spirit of God.* Shall God be God, and not have peculiar wayes and Methods of Acting, not to be fathomed or underſtood by man? He himſelfe hath told us to prevent our ſearch, that *his wayes are not as our wayes, nor his thoughts as our thoughts*. He is not tied to our Narrow Definitions of *Juſt* and *Injuſt*, they are words onely that bind us, but can lay no conſtraint upon him, who acts, like himſelfe, in a *Soveraigne* and *Unlimited* manner. Now, as in an Engine, if we do not ſee the Springs and Wheeles that move it, it is impoſſible we ſhould know how or which way it will turne; ſo ſince we cannot diſcerne or diſcover the 1 *Cor.* 11. 11. *Iſ.* 4. 8.

Principle, upon which the Great Mover and Diſpoſer of all things acts, this being locked up and hid in the Cabinet of his own Will, to which only his Son and Spirit have a key, we have nothing to doe but to ſubmit in Silence. *Whatever God doth*, ſaith the Preacher, however it may appeare outwardly Deformed or Miſ-ſhapen, yet
Eccl. 3. 14. *nothing can be added to it or taken from it*: it hath in it ſelfe an Entire and Abſolute Perfection; and the reaſon why God doth ſometimes bring ſtrange and perplexing things to paſſe, is, that men might diſpute! no, but *that they might feare before him.*

Uſe. The uſe is, if it be ſo, that *no man is a Competent Judge of the Equity and Juſtice of Gods Proceedings*, then it ſhould Teach us, *to ſilence our Vaine Reaſonings in the Matters of God*: we ſhould look upon them as Myſteries beyond our Reach, and therefore infinitely above our Cavill. Perhaps it is not a Rationall, I am ſure it is not a Chriſtian way of Arguing, *Non intelligo, ergo non Credo.* This I do not underſtand, I cannot perceive how ſuch or ſuch a point can be made out by Reaſon, or can conſiſt with thoſe Concluſions which I have embraced, therefore I will not believe it. It is the Taske, and it ſhould be the Triumph of Faith, to break through all ſuch Difficulties, & to remove even Mountaines of ſeeming Contradictions. The Apo-
1 Joh. 5. 4: ſtle calls *Faith our Victory, by which we overcome the World*; and if *Faith* overcomes the *World*, how much more ought it to overcome our Doubts, and our Reaſonings, which are but as it were the Clouds and Miſty part of the World. When our Saviour had diſcourſed concerning that great Myſtery of Living and Feeding upon him by Faith, the Apoſtles preſently cry out, *This is an hard ſay-*
Joh. 6. 60. *ing, who can beare it?* this is ſo Abſurd and Irrationall, that there is no enduring it. Our Saviour perceiving how they ſtaggered, he doth gently acquaint them with the Reaſon of their Erroneous Apprehenſion, viz. becauſe they

they judged according to fleſh, and humane appearance, *the Spirit*, ſaith he *quickneth, the fleſh profiteth nothing, my words they are ſpirit and they are life.v.*63.

To apply this–doth any dealing of God,put thee into an Anxious and a diſputing State, by all means ſuſpend thy cenſure, leaſt thou ſhouldſt *charge God fooliſhly*;and ſearch firſt into the principle by which thou proceedeſt, whether it be *Fleſh* or *Spirit*: for *reaſon* it ſelfe, till it be purged, till the dreggs be taken off and refined by the ſpirit of God,it is ſtill but *Fleſh*,a weake, low and carnall Principle, not at all fit for a Chriſtian to own: but is indeed one of thoſe earthly members, which we are commanded to ſubdue and Mortifie. To diſtruſt our own underſtandings, not to paſſe ſentence upon the firſt bluſh and offer of things,nor in ſpirituall concernments to be led by Humane appearance, this is the firſt and moſt Neceſſary part of *ſelfe-deniall.*

This uſe may be improved in many Particulars, but there are two things I mainly intend it for.

1. Firſt, *to fix, and ſettle our ſpirits, in that great,and ſo much Controverted Doctrine, concerning Gods decrees of eternall Election and Reprobation.*

2. Secondly *To ſuppreſſe and ſilence our murmurings, and repinings againſt God, in his Acts of Providence and outward dealings with us.*

Firſt the conſideration of mans unfitneſſe to Judg in the matters of God,ought *to ſettle and fix us in the Doctrine of Election and Reprobation.* That God *hath from all eternity choſen ſome, on whom he will have mercy: and hath, out of his good pleaſure, reprobated others*, is cleare from this and many other places of Scripture. But to reconcile this to Humane reaſon,or to ſatisfy all the Objections which may be brought from Philoſophy againſt it, I think the Apoſtle himſelfe did not pretend to doe. Here in this verſe, he ſeemes to Imply, that the beſt way to *decide*

this controverſy, is not to *diſpute* it: and in another place, when in a kind of Extaſie he cries out ὦ Βάθος —*Oh the Depth, of the Riches of the knowledge and wiſedome of God: How inſcrutable are his Judgments, and his waies unſearchable?* Rom. 11. 33. certainly he did thereby intend to put a ſtop unto our enquiry, that we might not venture into a depth, which we could not fathome.

What is ſaid by all ſides in this diſpute, I have often, as farre as my weakneſſe would give me leave, conſidered, but yet could never find ſatisfaction in any thing, but in that queſtion of the Apoſtles, and in bringing my reaſon to a *Non pluſſe*.

For whatever the *Arminians* pretend that the Doctrine of *Abſolute Predeſtination* is *Blaſphemous*, and I know not what, becauſe it ſeemes to make *God the Author of Sin*; yet indeed it doth no more do it, if it be well weighed, then their Doctrine of *Preſcience* doth: for which reaſon, *Socinus*, who very well underſtood the Controverſy, did not feare to deny even *Preſcience* it ſelfe: ſince whatever is infallibly fore-known, muſt infallibly come to paſſe, that is neceſſarily. For to diſtinguiſh between the neceſſity of the event, and the neceſſity of that which cauſes the event, is, I confeſſe a ſubtilty that I underſtand not, and am hopeleſſe ever to be ſatisfied in.

Leaving therefore the Diſputers of this Age, to the mercileſſe Fury of one anothers Penns, I ſhall give ſome few Practicall rules, whereby whoever guides himſelfe, will be freed from all thoſe perplexities which his reaſon otherwiſe would engage him in.

Firſt, *In all doubts never enquire what is rationall, but what is revealed:* the Word of God alone, which is the ground of our Faith, ought to be the object of our ſearch. If you find this Doctrine, that *God hath prepared ſome, even for everlaſting deſtruction, whileſt he hath compaſſion on others, and that meerely to manifeſt his own Glory*——if this

this Doctrine be plainly laid down thee, then farewell Reaſon, and ſet your Faith on worke, to find out carefully of which number you your ſelves are. For there are the Σωζόμενοι and the Απολλύμενοι *the Saved* and *the Loſt*, whoſe condition is as ſure and Irreverſible as if they were in Poſſeſſion of it already.

Secondly, *Let no doubts or Perplexities take you off from your obedience.* As no man needs feare to embrace Goſpell-Truth upon its own termes, ſo neither ought he by any conſequences of vaine & Carnall reaſoning to be withdrawn from the doing of his duty. He that finds in himſelfe ſuch a frame, that he is reſolved to goe on, and leave the Iſſue to God; though he periſh yet he will truſt in him; he will find at laſt all his darkneſſe and doubtings cleared up and ſcattered: for then we believe indeed, when with *Abraham* we act even againſt & beyond all *Humane Probability.*

Thirdly—*Be often asking your ſelves this Queſtion with the Apoſtle—what am I*, that I ſhould limit the Almighty, or Iudg the Holy one of Iſrael? What are we, poore duſt and aſhes, that we ſhould looke up to God except it be with trembling and amazement: to admire and not to diſpute his doings? For what are we, that we ſhould be preſcribing rules to him, and finding out new waies and methods of ſalvation, others then God himſelfe hath been pleaſed to diſcover? What are we, that we ſhould ſit upon the Decrees of God, and ſtaine the wiſedome of his counſells, with the dirt and mire of our own fancies? This Impartiall ſelfe examination will ſerve to cure, or at leaſt to allay our Curioſity.

Laſtly—*In all diſputes and doubts: ever think that part of the tenet ſafeſt, which doth leaſt Humor mans Pride, and doth moſt advance Gods Glory*: we cannot think too meanly and humbly of our ſelves, nor can we too much advance and exalt Gods *Soveraignty*. Tis this on which the Juſtice of all Gods proceedings is grounded: let God be Great and Glorious

Glorious, though every man be miſerable. To make God *all in all*, beſides that it is our duty, is likewiſe nothing elſe but an Anticipation of happineſſe, and is by the Apoſtle recorded--to be the Bleſſed Poſture, of our future ſtate. *1 Cor.* 15.28.

2 *Uſe.* Secondly, The conſideration of our *Incompetence to Judge the equity of Gods proceedings*, ſerves *to ſuppreſſe and moderate all repinings at the Providence of God in his outward diſpenſations*. No one thing is ſo great an inducement to Atheiſme, & direct denyall of God; as to diſtruſt the wiſedome & equity of his Providence. *David* confeſſeth that the temptation ariſing from hence, did ſo farre prevaile upon him, that his *feet had at moſt ſlipped*--i. he was juſt then ſliding, even almoſt going into ſome erroneous and blaſphemous conceit about this matter. The temptation was taken from the proſperity of the wicked--*I was envious at the fooliſh*-ſaith he, *v.*3. *when I ſaw the proſperity of the wicked. Cur malis benè ſit*, has been a queſtion that much puzled the Heathen world, and ſome of them have many excellent ſayings about it: but to ſpeak the truth, they ſeeme to be only things of wit, rather then of ſerious judgment: for this is certaine, who ever ſticks long upon this queſtion, cannot be guiltleſſe: ſince reaſon cannot reſolve it--*When I ſought to know this*, ſaith David, *it was too painfull for me. v.* 16. I did endeavour to debate and argue the caſe by my own reaſon, and from thence to anſwer my ſcruples, but I could not doe it, the objection did ſtill prevaile and overmaſter me. What did *David* then? we find that he went into *the Sanctuary of God*, v.17. he conſulted the Oracle, and there he found the reaſon of their Advancement---And then he concludes that diſcourſe, with taxing himſelfe of great folly, for not taking this courſe ſooner, but giving ſo much ſcope and latitude to his corrupt reaſoning--*So fooliſh was I and ignorant, I was as a Beaſt before thee. v.*22.

*Pſalm.*73.

That

That which was *Davids* practiſe ought to be ours, when we are ſet upon with the ſame temptation, we have lived to ſee as great variety of ſtrange providences as any nation under Heaven; nor is the reaſon of this as yet revealed, we cannot yet ſpell out Gods meaning, but certainly he has a great worke doing, which will in due time be accompliſhed.

So likewiſe in all particular events which concerne us, let us not ſo much conſider and reflect upon the things we ſee and feele, as upon the hand which ſent them. This will either eaſe our burdens, or at leaſt make us bear them with more cheerfulneſſe if we conſider that God laid them on, whoſe Power we cannot reſiſt, whoſe wiſedome we ought not to queſtion.

Let us ſtop our mouths, and quiet our diſcontents with this, that God is in the cloud, that *he workes all things* not according to his will barely, though that was enough, but *according to the counſell of his will.* There is a wiſedome and deſigne in every thing though we cannot reach it.

Many impatient *Jonahs* there are in the World, who think it becomes them to quarrell and conteſt with God, though *they have but loſt their gourd.* Whoſe ſpirit is like a *troubled Sea*, any ſmall wind will raiſe a ſtorme and beget a tempeſt in them.

Let all ſuch hearken to that advice of *Hamah--Talke no more ſo exceeding proudly, let not Arogancy come out of your mouth, for our God is a God of knowledge, by him Actions are weighed*--And not Actions onely, but events likewiſe: there are no ſuch things as raſh, caſuall and unpremeditated events: but that part of the skale, which falls to our lot, whether for good or bad, comes onely, becauſe God is ſo pleaſed to order and turne the balance. 1 *Sam.* 2. 2.

FINIS.

BRITISH MUSEUM

belonging to preceding

GODS Absolute Election OF A certaine and limited Number unto Eternall Life:

Asserted and Cleared out of *Acts* 13.48.

Δεῖ τὸν κύριον ἐν κριτὴν τῆς ἑαυτοῦ γνώμης, μὴ νευροσπαστούμενον ἀψύχων δίκην οργάνων, αφορμὰς ἴσως μόνον παρὰ τῆς ἔξωθεν αἰτίας λαμβάνοντας. *Clem.* Στρωμ:.4.*pag.*505.

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GODS

Absolute Election

OF

A certain and limited Num-

ber unto

Eternal Life:

BRITISH MUSEUM

Affirmed and Cleared out of

God's Word.

Acts 13.45.

Καὶ ἐπίστευσαν ὅσοι τεταγμένοι ἦσαν εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον.

And as many as were ordained to Eternall-life, believed.

THe Apoſtle *Paul* having in a large diſcourſe deduced Chriſtian Religion from its very Originall, and ſhewed, how in the ſeverall ages of the World, God ſtill carried on the ſame deſigne for the ſalvation of men by *Jeſus Chriſt*, as he that was not onely foretold, but figured in all their Legall Worſhip: you find—*v.*45. the Jewes *contradicting and blaſpheming:*—i. either railing on *Chriſt*, or elſe reviling *Paul*, and ignominiouſly ſlighting and traducing the Doctrine which he had delivered.

Whereupon the Apoſtle παῤῥησιασάμενοι—i. *ſpeaking freely*, or *plainly* tells them that the loſſe and damage by ſo doing would onely redound to themſelves for *hereby*, viz. by refuſing the tender of Salvation ſo freely offered, they evidenced that *they judged themſelves unworthy ſo great a mercy*, and therefore they being, as it were Αὐτοκατάκριτοι *men ſelfe-condemned*, he would have no more to doe with them, but from thence forward publiſh the Doctrine of the Goſpell to the Gentiles: intimating that God till then had empaled his Church, and confined it to the narrow circuit of *Judæa*, thereby as it were impriſoning that ſun in a lanterne: but now God would reſume his whole right, that

the

the earth might be the Lords and the fulnesse thereof: excluding no place, restreining no people from the benefit and comfort, which would flow from the light of the Gospell streaming in and shining amongst them.

Whereupon it followes v.48. *That when the Gentiles heard this they were glad, and Glorified the Word of the Lord —And as many as were ordained to Eternall Life believed.*

From the words I entend to insist upon and cleare, two Propositions.

1. First—That *there are some, and that a definite and limited number, which are by God from all eternity ordained unto Eternall life or salvation.*

2. Secondly *that the reason why one man believes, i. embraces the means of salvation, and another doth not, is finally to be resolved into Gods eternall Election of the one, and reprobation or rejection of the other.*

Both these doctrines are cleere from the words of the text, for this phrase—Ὅσοι τεταγμένοι ἦσαν—&c. *As many as were Ordained believed* implies, first that some certaine persons were ordained, whereby they are distinguished from the rest of the common hearers; and likewise it is added as a reason, why these believed, while the others continued in their impenitence: they were Ordained, therefore they Believed.

Before I prove the first Proposition viz: *That there are some and that a certaine number appointed unto life*,—which I think is evident in the text—I must not omit that this Word τεταγμένοι hath been variously rendred, and many attempts have been made to draw it from its true and native signification. The summe of what they say is briefly this that τεταγμένοι signifies Actively—*Qui se parant Vitæ æternæ, fitly disposed and qualified for the Gospell*—so that *Ordained* according to them, are not—*Ordained* by God, but such as are *Ordained* by themselves; Thus *Socinus*, *Grotius*, and

his interpreter Dr *Hammond.*

That these men who do professedly δουλεύειν τῇ θεοσεβείᾳ *serve a side*, and are unwilling to own any thing more in Religion then they can reconcile to reason, should thus strangely (I will not say Ignorantly, for it is too much Learning that causes this madnesse) but contrary to all rules of Grammar, and Analogy of the Greek tongue, make a passive verbe signify Actively, is to me no great wonder: for if they did not this, they would loose their cause, and then what would become of their reputation with their followers; which, whatever becomes of the truth, must be secured: so impossible is it to drive on those two contrary trades, of Gospell obedience, and Humane Applause.

But since the Learned and Ingenuous Mr *Mede* suffered himselfe to be so farre gone in his Criticismes, as to render this Word--*In Procinctu*-i. such who are in a posture to lay hold upon, and candidates of *Eternall life*; *quot quot de Agmine & Classe fuerant credentium.* So that τεταγμένοι shall be not Ordained but Ordered-i. *modo militari*, In ranke and file as it were, marshalled and Embattelled unto eternall life: This is a conceit so streined, so unsuitable to Scripture language: and withall so much misbecoming the learning of that Worthy man, [illegible] I cannot passe it over without observing these two things,

1. That it is a very hard matter for the soberest and best tempered Christians, such as I take Mr *Mede* to have been, to captivate their reason and to subdue their Learning unto the plainnesse and simplicity of the Gospell.

2. That there is great need for all those who are students in Divinity, and who designe themselves for that Honourable, and never enough valued Profession of Preaching the Gospell, that they make themselves worthy of it, as by all other excellencies, so especially by carefull and diligent search of the Scriptures in their Originall

Languages

Languages: And that, not onely becauſe he ought not to Prophecy who knowes not how to interpret, but leſt men who pretend to skill and exactneſſe in thoſe Tongues, doe abuſe our ignorance to an Embracing of their errors, while we are not able to diſtinguiſh between a true Text and a bad comment. For I doe not ſee how we can rationally refuſe any Interpretation though falſe, if we are not able knowingly to make out a better of our owu.

But for the clearing of this Text very little skill will ſerve, for who knowes not, that knowes any thing of Greeke, that τεταγμένοι was never yet taken Actively, and that the word cannot be otherwiſe rendred here, then it is every where elſe-viz. *Ordained* or *Appointed*. Thus Rom. 13. 2. *the Powers that are, are* τεταγμέναι ὑπὸ θεοῦ--- *Appointed of God*. And *Act*. 17. 26. *God hath bound or limited* ὡρισμένους προστεταγμένους--*the fore-appointed ſeaſons*--*i.* God hath ſet a fixed and certaine period unto the duration of thoſe ſeverall changes and ſcenes of time, which he himſelfe hath preordained: ſo in this place τεταγμένοι εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον *are thoſe that are by God certainly and infallibly appointed unto eternall life*. God being not onely τομίας χρόνων, the diſpoſer of ſeaſons, but of perſons.

2 Cor 4. Theſe are they who by the Apoſtle *Paul* are called σωζόμενοι:—the ſ[illegible] ſaved allready-whoſe ſalvation is as ſure and certaine, as if they were allready put into full Poſſeſſion of it.

In another place they are ſtiled προορισθέντες *foreordained or predeſtined to Grace and Glory*: and that we might not doubt, what it was that gave the birth, and riſe to ſuch a gracious appointment-- The Apoſtle addes that it was Eph. 1. 5 &c. κατὰ πρόθεσιν, *according to the purpoſe of him*, who doth not wait for nor depend upon outward motives, but *workes all things according to the Counſell of his own will*.

Rom. 11. 5. They are called ἐκλογὴ χάριτος, *the Election of Grace* i. ſuch perſons of whoſe Election Grace onely

was

was the Cauſe; and v. 7. ſimply Ἐκλογὴ, *the Election*, i. e. thoſe whom God hath culled and choſen out from the Reſt of Mankind, and deſigned for Everlaſting Happineſſe.

The force of theſe and many other Texts of Scripture to the ſame purpoſe, make all ſides agree, that *Some indeed are Appointed unto Life*, but *who theſe are, that God himſelfe doth not know*, ſo *Socinus*: that *though ſome are Appointed, yet there is a Poſſibility for All*, ſo *Arminius*. That is in ſhort, that Some ſhall be ſaved is Certaine; but that the Perſons and their Number is unlimited and uncertaine.

Before therefore I prove the Point by Scripture, give me leave to bewaile a little the ſad Condition of thoſe men, who take a Liberty to Interpret Revealed Truth by Rationall Notions, for in ſo doeing, through a juſt Judgment of God upon their Curioſity, they are forced to run into and maintaine thoſe Fond and Ridiculous Errors, which a Sober man would bluſh to own.

As in this Caſe, can it be imaginable that God ſhould deſigne any of his Creatures unto Eternall Life, and yet not know who they are? as *Socinus* affirmes, who brings in God, as the *Platoniſts* did of Old, not chuſing of Perſons, but Propoſitions; not deſigning this or that man to Salvation, and ſo to Faith Abſolutely by vertue of his Prerogative; but onely to Salvation Indefinitely upon ſuppoſition of Faith, which whether any will embrace or not, he doth not feare to Aſſert, that God himſelfe doth not know. So careleſſe are men of Gods Honour, while they Study and Contend for their own. For if the Caſe be ſo indeed, God doth onely leave himſelfe in the Darke, and doth not exerciſe his Power and Preſcience about his Nobleſt Creature, Man.

The Doctrine of *Univerſall Redemption*, though not ſo bareſaced, yet labours with the ſame Abſurdity: for if

God knowes who ſhall be ſaved, then it is certaine there is no Poſſibility for all; or elſe we muſt conclude Gods Knowledge to be onely Gueſſe, and maintaine a too Apparent Contradiction: for if God knowes who ſhall be ſaved, then it is evident that theſe onely ſhall be ſaved, who are ſo known: whereas if there be a Poſſibility left for all, then it is Certaine, that God did not infallibly know, who they were that ſhould be ſaved, but left the whole to Hazard.

I muſt confeſſe I doe not willingly deſire to deale this way in Reproving any Error: for had I leſſe to ſay in Reaſon then I have, for Gods *Eternall Abſolute Election*, yet the Scripture being ſo Full and Poſitive in it, to that alone I would reſigne and give up my Faith, and not willingly ſuffer my ſelfe to partake either of their Fate, or of their Folly, who cannot endure to be Taught, but in Spirituall, and therefore Inconceivable Things, would faine *be wiſe above what is written.*

For that there is *a Set and Limited Number appointed to Salvation*, appeares from Scripture, in that God is ſaid to *Know who are his*, 2 *Tim.* 2, 19. i.e. Not their Natures onely, but their Names alſo: for therefore our Saviour *Luc.* 10. 20. bids his Apoſtles *rejoyce in that their Names were written in Heaven*, put into Gods Muſter-roll and Catalogue of Eternity, from whence they could never be blotted out.

Known unto the Lord, ſaith the Apoſtle, *are all his works* ἀπ' αἰῶνος *from Ever*, *Act.* 15. 18. i. e. ſo known as to be diſpoſed and ordered by him, nay therefore known, becauſe ordered, for ſo to diſtinguiſh between Gods Knowledge and his Power as in his Actions *ad extrà* to ſeparate one from the other, is to ſpeake neither Senſe nor Scripture: for *whom God forknew, them, all* them, & onely them, not in their Qualifications, but in their Reſpective perſons, *did he predeſtine to be conformable to the Image of his Son.*

Rom.

Rom. 8. 29. And if of an Elect person *all the Haires are Numbred*, how much more of Christs Mysticall Body, are all the Members numbred? which Body is already compleat as to Gods Purpose concerning it, and to Imagine that any shall fill a place there, whom God doth not already know as particularly, as if they were Actually Existing, is to measure Eternity by time, and to make God like our selves Fraile and Fallible. *Mat.* 10. 30.

The Reason of this is, because *every Act of God is Absolute:* as his Nature is, so are the Actions which flow from it, Unconditionall and Irrespective.

For the clearing of which Reason, it will be necessary to explaine in the Act of Election 1. How God, who Elects, 2. How man, who is elected, are to be Considered.

For the First, Many there be that think *God in the Act of Election, is to be Considered as a Judge*; and hence argue against this Absolute and Irrespective Election from those Known and Obvious places of Scriptures, *—Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right? shall God accept persons?* or preferre one before another, when all are Equall? how is this Reconcileable to his Justice? *Gen.* 18. 25. & *Rom.* 3. 5. *Act.* 10. 30.

I answer, that in the Act of Election *God* is not to be considered as a *Judge*, because

1. *A Judge as a Judge, is tied to a Rule, which he may not Transgresse*; but what Rule can be Imagined to Tye God, except what he hath set himselfe? which in the Act of Election, that being Eternall, and flowing onely from the Will of God, cannot rationally be supposed.

2. *The Businesse of a Judge, as a Judge, is to Bestow Rewards and Punishments according to Merit*, but in Election the Motive onely on Gods part is Grace, and the End is Glory.

3. *God is not at all Obliged to Man*; he that made man, may freely appoint him to what Ends he pleases, without doing him any Injury: for *hath not the Potter power over his*

his Clay? though for a man to plead with God in this Case is somewhat a worse Solecisme, then for Clay to quarrell with the Potter. Since there Matter strives only with its Fashioner, but here Nothing contends with its Maker. There the Clay though it be not a *vessell of Honour*, yet remaines Clay still, but here not the Quality only, but the Substance likewise is subject to the Pleasure of its Framer.

Lastly, *The Apostle*, being to give a Reason of this Difference between one man and another, *ascribes it altogether to Gods good pleasure*, and for a Proose of that Assertion, he alledges a Saying of God himselfe *Rom.* 9. 15. *I will have Mercy on whom I will have Mercy*.

So that the Act of God in chusing some to Everlasting Life, and refusing others, is not an *Act of Justice*, for they neither did nor could deserve it, nor is it properly an *Act of Mercy*, for that any should be saved at all was meerly from Mercy, but that these rather then others, was not properly from Mercy because Mercy is Equall to all that Equally deserve it, or Equally stand in need of it, but here between Equalls a distinction is made. *Election* therefore is an Act of *Soveraigne Will*, the Apostle calls it εὐδοκίαν τοῦ θελήματος *Eph.* 1. 5. *The good pleasure of Gods will*, which as none can resist, so none ought to Question, for neither is Man stronger then God, nor ought he to think himselfe Wiser. Thus God in the Act of Election is not to be Considered *ut Judex, sed ut Dominus*, as a Judge, but as a Soveraigne.

For the second, viz. how the Persons, who are Elected, are to be Considered. Some affirme they are to be looked upon as *Believers*, viz. *That God foreseeing some would embrace Faith and Salvation, when it was offered them, he did therefore chuse some unto Everlasting Life*. And this Conceit is not onely maintained by our Moderne *Arminians*, but, that I may not seeme to mince the matter, was in gene-

generall the opinion of almoſt all the Greeke and Latine Fathers, except only *Auſtine* of the Primitive and Purer Times. They who have read them, will affirme as much, and they who doubt may read their Sayings to this Purpoſe, faithfully Collected by *Voſſius* in his *Hiſtoria Pelagiana.*

But this Suppoſition, however Plauſible (as indeed what is not, that gives man a Power) and though backed with ſo much Authority, yet ſeems to me to be directly contrary both to *Reaſon* and *Scripture.*

Firſt to *Reaſon*, becauſe

1. *This puts ſomething as a Cauſe to move Gods will:* for if Faith foreſeen in man were the Cauſe why God choſe him, then ſomething without God ſhall have an Influence upon him: which certainly is very Abſurd, if not Blaſphemus: for if God ſhall be ſuppoſed to take a Reaſon of his Actings from ſomething without himſelfe, that thing muſt needs alter him, and conſequently be greater than he.

Secondly, becauſe *this very Faith thus foreſeen is the Gift of God*, as the Apoſtle affirmes Eph. 2. 8. and none that I know deny it: ſo that if *Faith foreſeen* were the Cauſe of chuſing any, the Decree of God muſt thus be ordered,— I foreſee that I will give ſuch a one Faith, therefore I decree that I will ſave him, i.e. I decree to give the meanes, before I have yet appointed the End: which is a Method of Marſhalling Gods Decrees, that a knowing Heathen would be aſhamed to think of.

More might be urged, but I haſten to Scriptnre Confutation: we find our Saviour ſayes of his Diſciples (which who ſees not how Applicable it is to all the Elect) that *he choſe them, they had not choſen him*, Joh. 15. 16. but if *Faith foreſeen* were a Cauſe, he muſt have ſaid the cleane contrary, for then he would have choſen them, becauſe they had firſt choſe him.

And the Apostle *John* 1 Ep. 4. 10. sayes, *this is love, not that we loved God first, but that he loved us, and for that reason sent his Son,* not as foreseeing our Affection, but as pursuing the Intent, and procuring in us the Effects of his own.

And the Apostle *Paul* doth every where assert *Faith* to be a *Fruit* and not a *Cause* of *Election*; that we are *chosen unto* Good Works, not *for* them; i. e, that they who are *Predestined*, shall certainly *Believe*, not they who *Believe* were therefore *Predestined*; which is the summe of his Discourse *Eph.* 1.

So that in the Act of Election, men are to be considered as meerly Passive, i.e, as *Creatures*, not as *Believers*; as such who were liable to be disposed by God how he pleased, but had no Possibility of meriting any thing from him.

This is affirmed of the *Israelites* in Generall, *Deut.* 7. that *God chose them, not because they were better, or more Righteous then other People, but because he set his Heart upon them.* And lest they should perhaps pride themselves with a Conceit, that for their own worth and Excellence this Priviledge was given them, they are expressely told there was no such matter, for *they were a stiffenecked and Rebellious People, Deut.* 9.6. Able rather to thwart, and, if possible, to undoe Gods Election, then to procure it.

Thus we find *Math.* 11. *that Christ* preached the Gospell to *Bethsaida*, and to them of *Capernaum*, who were so far from meriting, that our Saviour affirmes of them, *Sodom and Gomorrah* had they enjoyed the like Favour, *would have been much more repentant then they.*

And to conclude in Particulars, the Apostle *Paul* handling this very Argument, and intending for ever, so far as Scripture evidence will reach, to silence the Disputer of this World, that God alone may have the Glory of his Grace, he instances in *Jacob*, who was by Virtue of this Abso-

Abſolute Election preferred before *Eſau*, (the Temporall Condition ſerving to ſhadow out the Eternall) for leſt any Imagination ſhould ariſe, as if *Jacob* in himſelfe were the more deſerving of the Two, he ſaies it was done *before any of them had done either Good or Evill*, Rom. 9. 11. And if it ſhould be Asked, how it came to paſſe that one was taken, and the other left; what did induce God to put ſuch a Difference between Two, who were Morally Equall, and Naturally *Eſau* was to have the Advantage, the Apoſtle addes, that it was done to this End, *that the Purpoſe of God according to Election might ſtand, not of Workes, but of him that calleth.* Wherein the Apoſtle pleading the Cauſe of Gods Honour, and being Jealous of his Prerogative, reſolveth all things into Gods Purpoſe, and referres us thither to ſeek the Ultimate Difference of men's either Temporall or Eternall Condition. And he that will not acquieſce, when he thus finds it written, but will bring his Wit to ſtrive and Wreſtle againſt the Will of God, he cannot alter that, but onely does unhappily evince to himſelfe, that while he continues that Humor, he is not of the Number of Gods Elect, for all that are, a Willing, Humble, and Obedient People.

Againſt this which hath been urged, there is that I know of but one Conſiderable Objection; and that is, *if the Number of thoſe which ſhall be ſaved be limited and Certaine, ſo that there is no Poſſibility for more, how comes it to paſſe that the Prophets and Apoſtles, are ſo Importunate, with all indifferently to Come in, and Repent, that they might be ſaved:* and *God himſelfe is often brought in in Scripture chiding and Expoſtulating with Sinners for deſtroying themſelves, and for refuſing Salvation; which ſeems to be a Vain and Ludicrous thing, if the Number be ſo Set already, that there is no Roome for more.*

This Objection is yet made more Tragicall by the many Heavy charges and Enditements, which are drawn up

up against this, as some stile it, Partiall and Cruell dealing, from the Common Places of Gods Justice and Mercy, which men who love themselves are very willing to Enlarge, and therefore easily hearken to those who dare declaime upon such Subjects: But these Vaine and Empty Flourishes, however insoluble they may seeme to some, who are guided by the first Impression and sound of Words, are of no Importance, if we fix *Election* onely upon *Gods Will*; for this will presently cut off all Witty Cavills, if we can prove that God will indeed have it so; and therefore I look upon the former Objection as their maine strength, because it immediately tends to Practise, and seemes to beget this Opinion, that Gods *Secret* and *Revealed will* do Thwart & Contradict each other. Therefore I answer

1. That *though few shall be saved, and those Few determined, yet because they are unknown to us, we are to look upon all as in a saveable Condition.* Thus the Prophets and Apostles did in their so frequent and Repeated Instances with those to whom they preached, and their Example we are to follow: For peremptorily to conclude against any, and to deny them the meanes of Salvation, because they are not Elected, is an Uncharitable Presumption in us, which we shall more heavily account for, then they will do for their Disobedience and Unbelieſe.

2. *There is no other way for those who are Elected, to come to the Knowledge of the Truth,* but by *a Generall Proposall of it Indifferently to all*; which is our Saviours meaning in those many Parables, which intimate a Promiscuous Call, from whence he concludes, that *though many are Called, yet few are Chosen*; and we may invert the Proposition thus, though Few are Chosen, yet many must be called. In this World the Tares and the Wheat must be equally Tended, and though they grow together with some discernable Difference, yet it is not the Ministers

ſters buſineſſe to make a Finall Sepatation.

Laſtly, *There is a Twofold end in Preacking the Goſpell, the firſt and principall is to bring in Gods Elect, but Secondarily it ſerves to condemne the Reprobate, and to make their Damnation juſt.*. For what can they pleade at the laſt day to Juſtifie their Unbeliefe, ſince when they were Called as it were by name, yet they did willingly exclude themſelves, and thereby, as the Apoſtle ſayes of the Jewes here, *judged themſelves Unworthy of Eternall Life.*

Thus the Apoſtle ſaies that *Gods Divinity and Spirituall Being was diſcovered in the Creation:* and if it was asked to what Purpoſe, ſince ſo few did either Believe or Worſhip him as they ought, he anſwers, that it was for this End --- Εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτοὺς Ἀναπολογήτους, *Rom.* 1. 20. That they might have nothing to Pleade, no quirke nor Apology left to Excuſe their Atheiſme and Idolatry.

And *if our Goſpell be hid,* ſaith he, *it is Hid to thoſe which are loſt;* 2 *Cor.*4.3. diſcovered to them, but hid in them, becauſe they do not take paines, as they ſhould, to ſearch out its inward and Spirituall meaning.

So we are, ſaith he, Εὐωδία Θεῷ, *a ſweet ſmelling Sacrifice to God,* 2 *Cor.*11.13. both ἐν τοῖς Σωζομένοις, and ἐν τοῖς Ἀπολλυμένοις, *in the ſaved and in the loſt.* i. e. We do God good and acceptable Service, when we preach the Word, whether it ſerves to Save or to Condemne, for in the one Gods Mercy, in the other Gods Juſtice is manifeſted. Thoſe that come in will find mercy, for thereto they were appointed: thoſe that ſtand out, ſhall be ſure of Juſtice, becauſe when they were ſummoned as well as others, yet they would not, becauſe they would not. They did voluntarily contemne the Word of Life, and therefore can blame none but themſelves, if at laſt they find it a Word of Death.

If any think this *Harſh* and *Severe,* I cannot deny but it is ſo, and thus the Apoſtle though it *Rom.* 9. 22. when

he ſayes, that God herein did manifeſt ὀργὴν *his Anger as well as his Power.* Nay, he goes ſomewhat farther, and ſpeaking of the ſame Decree, *Rom.*11.22. he calls it Ἀποτομίαν θεοῦ, *the Extreme Rigor and ſharp Severity of God,* but from thence he doth not take occaſion to enveigh againſt it, as our Bold and Blaſphemous diſputers doe, but concludes as it were in a Rapture, *v.* 33. Ὦ βάθος --- *Oh the Depth* &c.

As for thoſe many Expreſſions wherein God is ſaid to declare his willingneſſe that *All* ſhould be ſaved, (as 1*Tim.*2.4. &c.)they may either be Interpreted of Gods will as declared by the Preachers of it, which is Indefinite to All that Believe and Repent: or elſe, they may be underſtood Ἀνθρωποπαθῶς, and ſpoken after the manner of men, in the ſame ſenſe that God is ſaid to have Eies and Eares and other Bodily Parts, whereby he is pleaſed to render himſelfe Intelligible by us. For if God did indeed Will the Salvation of *All*, then it is Certaine that All would be ſaved, for *God can do whatever he wills:* but ſince it is manifeſt that *All* are not Saved, it is evident likewiſe that God did not will *All* ſhould be ſaved, for *who hath reſiſted his Will?*

As for that *Velleity*, i.e. a kind of Longing, Wiſhing, or Woulding diſpoſition in God, which ſome raſhly bring in to ſalve their *Phenomena* by, ſince it is Ineffectuall and conſequently Imperfect, it is altogether unfit to be aſcribed to God, for it is nothing elſe but Infirmity and Want of Power in Man.

So much for the Firſt Obſervation.

D. 2. The ſecond Obſervation was this, *that the Reaſon why one man believes*, i.e. *embraces the meanes of Salvation, and another doth not, is finally to be reſolved into Gods eternall Election of the one, and* Reprobation *of the other:* or more briefly thus, that *onely thoſe who are ordain'd unto eternall Life, either do or can believe.*

And

And the Reaſon is briefly this, becauſe *onely thoſe who are deſigned to the End, ſhall be made effectuall Partakers of the Meanes which leads unto it.*

Thus our Saviour *Math.*13. rendring a Reaſon why ſome did not underſtand his Doctrine, he gives this, becauſe *to them it was not given:* and the Apoſtle calls the Goſpell *a Savour of Life*, onely σωζομένοις *to the Saved.* 1 *Cor.* 1 (i. e.) Actually deſigned to Salvation. And the ſame Apoſtle exhorting the *Theſſalonians* to Faith and Love, he gives this as a Motive, 1 *Theſ.* 9. *becauſe they were not appointed to Wrath, but to obtaine Salvation by Jeſus Chriſt.* Where by the way, we may take notice, that a Certaine Knowledge of our Eternall Election is ſo far from hindering any in the Practiſe of Godlineſſe, that it is by the Apoſtle uſed as an Argument to quicken their Endeavour; as if he had ſaid, becauſe God hath Appointed you unto Eternall Life, therefore labour after the Meanes which leads unto it.

There is a ſetled Chaine and Connexion of Cauſes, which do immutably inferre one another: To be ſaved preſuppoſes Obedience, That, Faith; That, the Gift of God, and that runs up to the Higheſt Link, which is the Grace and Favour of God to every poor believer. It is certaine that οὐ πάντων ἡ πίστις, all have not the Grace, becauſe they want the Gift of Faith: that being not thrown at Randome on all, but reſerved as a Peculiar Bleſſing for Gods choſen ones; and them he calls, while he leaves others to their Naturall Hardneſſe and Impenitence.

It is not in Vaine or Figuratively ſpoken onely 2 *Cor.* 5.17. that every Believer is Καινὴ Κτίσις, ſaid to be *new borne, againe created and Faſhioned* &c. but theſe Phraſes imply this Neceſſary Truth, that as none but thoſe who are created men, can put forth the Acts of men, and ſuch Creation they could not procure nor contribute to themſelves, becauſe as yet they were not; ſo none but thoſe

who are Created unto Good Workes, can live in them, becauſe Naturally they want a Principle, whereby they ſhould underſtand or Reliſh them. And this is the Benefit of that Eternall Election, whereby *God workes in all that he loves all their workes both in them and for them, Phil.* 2. 13. that they might know and Confeſſe to the praiſe of his Glorious Grace, that *it is not in him that Wills, nor in him that Runs, but only in God that ſhewes Mercy, Rom.* 9. 16.

Before I make any Uſe, I muſt prevent an Objection, which every man Naturally is ready to Urge, and not to take Notice of it, were to prevaricate with the Truth. The Objection is this, *if it be ſo that Some, and that a Limited Number are Appointed to Life, and onely ſuch can believe, then it follows that we may live as we liſt, for if we are Appointed to Life we ſhall be ſaved, God will in his good time Accompliſh his Purpoſe concerning us, which all our Endeavour can neither Promote nor Alter.*

To this Objection which moſt Carnall Minds do not onely Reaſon but Live by, I may Anſwer as the Apoſtle did, when having aſſerted the Freeneſſe of Grace, and how altogether undeſerved it was on our part, he brings in a profane perſon asking this Queſtion, *ſhall we continue in Sin, that Grace may Abound ? Rom.* 6.i.e. what ſhall we put God to it, and Try if we can Out-ſin the Riches of his Mercy? To this the Apoſtle replies only Μὴ γένοιτο, *let it not be*, or it may not be; ſuch a Thought can never ariſe in any ones Heart, who does Truly underſtand what Mercy meanes.

So may I ſay here, if any who conceives himſelfe Elected, ſhall draw this Concluſion from hence, becauſe God hath choſen me, and I am ſure of my Salvation, therefore I will run on and provoke him daiely, and ſtrive as it were, to blot out and Croſſe his Decree: Μὴ γένοιτο, Thou canſt not do it, thou canſt not apprehend that God loved

thee

thee with an everlaſting loves, and ſingled thee out from the lumpe of mankind when ſo many millions were to be undone eternally, but it will worke upon thee, and melt all thy affections into a gratefull returne of ſervice unto that God, to whom thou art obliged for ſo infinite and undeſerved mercy.

But if any who hath a mind to live wickedly ſhall Argue--If I am not deſigned to life I ſhall be damned, let me do what I can--I anſwer

Firſt, that *there is no poſſibylity for any truth to be ſo cleare, but that evill men may abuſe it to their own deſtruction:* and I believe every one ſees how the making Gods decrees conditionall will lead a corrupt mind to the ſame Inference, For he may as well ſay--If God foreſee, that I ſhall believe, I ſhall believe; and ſo in the meane while take his liberty; But

Secondly, Conſider that *as Gods decree of Election hath no influence to Neceſſitate the will of any*, but he that believes though ordained to it, yet believes freely and willingly; ſo *the Decree of Reprobation hath no influence at all to the Damning of any:* becauſe though thoſe who are Reprobated ſhall certainely be damned, yet ſentence ſhall not paſſe upon them according to the act of Gods Reprobation, but according to the merit of their works. Gods decree is made by power, but it's executed by Law; and therefore while thy damnation is yet uncertaine, doe not diſpute thy ſelfe into ſuch a ſtate, as to endeavour to make it juſt.

Laſtly, *The Rule of our Obedince is not Gods decree but Gods command.* *Moſes* when he had given the Law, exhorts them to walke according to it, and to check their Inquiſitiveneſſe, tells them that they were *not to Aſcend into Heaven,* there to pry and ſearch into Gods Decree concerning themſelves, *but the word was nigh them, in their hearts that they might do it,* Deut. 11.12.

And the reaſon is bottomed upon that eternall and unanſwerable truth--*Secret things belong to God, but things revealed to us*--that they may be our rule to walke by.

So that in ſhort we are ſo to aſcribe all Power & Praiſe to God,

who are Created unto Good Workes, can live in them, becauſe Naturally they want a Principle, whereby they ſhould underſtand or Reliſh them. And this is the Benefit of that Eternall Election, whereby *God workes in all that he loves all their workes both in them and for them, Phil.* 2. 13. that they might know and Confeſſe to the praiſe of his Glorious Grace, that *it is not in him that Wills, nor in him that Runs, but only in God that ſhewes Mercy, Rom.* 9. 16.

Before I make any Uſe, I muſt prevent an Objection, which every man Naturally is ready to Urge, and not to take Notice of it, were to prevaricate with the Truth. The Objection is this, *if it be ſo that Some, and that a Limited Number are Appointed to Life, and onely ſuch can believe, then it follows that we may live as we liſt, for if we are Appointed to Life we ſhall be ſaved, God will in his good time Accompliſh his Purpoſe concerning us, which all our Endeavour can neither Promote nor Alter.*

To this Objection which moſt Carnall Minds do not onely Reaſon but Live by, I may Anſwer as the Apoſtle did, when having aſſerted the Freeneſſe of Grace, and how altogether undeſerved it was on our part, he brings in a profane perſon asking this Queſtion, *ſhall we continue in Sin, that Grace may Abound ? Rom.* 6, i.e. what ſhall we put God to it, and Try if we can Out-ſin the Riches of his Mercy? To this the Apoſtle replies only Μὴ γένοιτο, *let it not be*, or it may not be; ſuch a Thought can never ariſe in any ones Heart, who does Truly underſtand what Mercy meanes.

So may I ſay here, if any who conceives himſelfe Elected, ſhall draw this Concluſion from hence, becauſe God hath choſen me, and I am ſure of my Salvation, therefore I will run on and provoke him daiely, and ſtrive as it were, to blot out and Croſſe his Decree: Μὴ γένοιτο, Thou canſt not do it, thou canſt not apprehend that God loved thee

thee with an everlaſting loves, and ſingled thee out from the lumpe of mankind when ſo many millions were to be undone eternally, but it will worke upon thee, and melt all thy affections into a gratefull returne of ſervice unto that God, to whom thou art obliged for ſo infinite and undeſerved mercy.

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So that in ſhort we are ſo to aſcribe all Power & Praiſe to God,

as to looke upon and acknowledge him the great and ſupreme diſpoſer of all things--but yet we are ſo to live in our obedience and ſubmiſſion to his command, as if nothing was at all decreed concerning us, but that we were wholly left to the counſell and power of our own will.

For if we conclude againſt our ſelves,and live like reprobates, we are ſure to periſh.

But if with hearty and zealous endeavour we ſtrive to doe the will of God, and leave the event unto his merciſull providence,againſt ſuch, I dare boldly affirme it, there is no condemnation, and the world ſhall ſooner periſh then ſuch a ſoule miſcarry.

Therefore the *Uſe* I ſhall make of this diſcourſe, ſo neceſſary for theſe cavilling times, is to exhort us all *that we would leave off diſputing and fall to practiſe.*

Since it is certaine that the *foundation of God ſtandeth ſure* which is this,*that God knoweth who are his*, --i. knoweth them definitely,we may vexe and diſtemper our ſelves by wrangling,but we ſhall not be able to ſhake or alter that.

All the while we are diſputing we are like *Abrahams* Ram caught by the hornes in the Thicket, when we ſhould be offered up in ſacrifice,we are vainly ſtrugling to entangle and ſnare our ſelves with our own Dilemmas.

It would be counted madneſſe in a Traveller,who has a great way to goe, and but a little time to performe his Journies in, if he ſhould leave his road, and needleſſely run into a wood, where, beſides the troubleſomeneſſe of the paſſage, he is ſure to looſe his time, if not himſelfe, and in the end ſit down to lament his folly.

No leſſe unwiſe are we if we leave the ſafe and known path of Gods Commandments, to wander in the endleſſe maze and Labyrinth of Gods decrees.

If in worſhip, when a man ſtrives to ſerve God more ſtrictly or in a more ſpecious manner then the rule warrants him, his whole devotion is ſlighted with a *Quis Requiſivit hæc?*who bad you

you trouble your *ſelfe* with theſe things? how much more ſeverely ſhall he be reproved, who ventures upon a forbidden as well as undoing curioſity?

In ſhort all the while we are arguing, we are out of Gods way; and in the way onely of our own inventions; and till we get out of it, we may juſtly feare that the iſſue will be, confuſion, amazement, doubting, and at laſt deſpaire.

If men would but once ποιεῖν εἰς τὸ σωφρονεῖν be ſober in their reaſonings, it would appeare but a modeſt requeſt, that God and his word alone ſhould have the honour, above and beyond our private conceptions. For he will be found juſt, when he comes to Judgment, but woe be to that man who daires arraign him?

Whatever vaine men may anogate to themſelves, and upon the confidence of ſuperficiall and empty Rhetorick, venture to entern edle with, and to paſſe their cenſure upon matters ſo infinitely above their reach, yet they will find at laſt, that obedience is better then knowledge, that ſelfe denyall is the onely Goſpel-ſacrifice, and of all Chriſtians, the humbleſt Chriſtian is the beſt. Therefore

Secondly, *Since there are certaine Number appointed unto Eternall Life, let us give our ſelves no reſt, till we can comfortably pronounce to our ſelves that we are of that Number.*

Many are the ſignes by which a man may judge of his eternall condition, and one of them is expreſſed here in the Text--That *who were Ordained unto Eternall life believed*--i. Believed the word of the Lord, concerning ſalvation by Chriſt.

So that goe preſently and aske your ſelves this queſtion, do I believe? *i.* Am I willing to receive Chriſt, and Salvation? Yes, perhaps you will ſay, I am willing.

Then go on farther and aske, but am I willing to receive Chriſt upon his owne Termes, to acknowledge my owne wretchedneſſe without him, to fly to him, as I would to Shore out of a Tempeſt? Do I ſee my ſelfe in ſo Undone and loſt a Condition, that nothing but his ſatisfaction can relieve me? then goe to

Chriſt,

Christ, he calls thee, he calls thee as effectually, as if thou heardst a voyce from Heaven saying Come: *Come unto me thou weary and laden Soule and I will give thee rest*, *Mat:* 2. 28. Come with all thy Sins, nay with all thy Feares upon thee; and I will take thy Burden, I will settle thy Distractions, and speake to thy soule in the midst of its Disquiets, Soule be at peace, I can make up all thy Wants, and am able to save to the uttermost.

If after this thou canst be content with nothing but *Christ*, if thou art willing to quit all for him, and to count the world only as a stage, where either thy Faith or Patience must be daily exercised: if thou dost find that sweetnesse in the Face of a Reconciled God, as no earthly enjoyment could bribe thee to a willing commission of any knowne sin against him, then goe and enter into thy Rest, and take an earnest of thy future joy. For if the case be thus with thee, and thou persevereſt in it, Heaven and Happinesse are as surely thine as if thou wert allready there: and even while thou livest, thou art placed in so high a sphere of Felicity and content, as all the laboured and perishing comforts of this world cannot amount to fill up one minute of thy entire satisfaction.

This deserves to be more particularly insisted upon, and some motives likewise might be used to presse all unto this duty of examining their future state.

But certainly they who know what *Eternity* is, and how neare they are to it, how every minute, for ought they know, may waft them thither, they will not long put off or deferre the enquiry: for all the while they doe so, they evince to themselves that they have no lot nor portion in the Heavenly Inheritance. For though both Grace and Glory are bestowed Freely, yet wee may sadly conclude, that they are not designed for those who looke not after them.

FINIS.

A Brief

RELATION

Containing an *Abreviation* of

THE

ARGUMENTS

Urged by the late

PROTECTOR

Against the Government of this

NATION by a KING or a Single Person.

To Convince men of the danger and inconveniency thereof.

Urged by him to many of the Army at St. Albans, Windsore, at White-hall (a little before the King was beheaded) and at several other places.

Published for the good and information of Parliament, Army and People.

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